



Fraud Newsletter

January 2007
Volume 1 Issue 5

Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Fraud and ID Theft Information – To Better Protect the Residents of Lewis County

"If it's too good to be true it normally is"

Fraud is simply a theft by trick. It can take the form of chain letters claiming huge amounts of cash to those who send money in or people claiming they will provide a service and never do.

Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception for economic gain. This newsletter is intended to keep the public informed of the most recent fraud schemes happening in our county. It will also provide resources to help you take precautions to protect yourself from these vicious crimes.

PROTECT YOUR ID

- 1** Always know who you are providing personal information to
- 2** If you use passwords to access accounts make sure to change them often
- 3** Never provide personal information in response to any unsolicited offer
- 4** Know the company you are dealing with when making online purchases

Current Scams and Frauds Hitting Lewis County

Phishing Scams

Phishing Scams are those emails you receive that appear to be from a bank or company you deal with all the time. When you read the email it alerts you to the fact your account has been compromised and you must take immediate action to keep the account active. Within the email are instructions to click on a link that will guide you through the verification process. The email is a fake and so is the link. It is all a trap to steal your personal and account information. Within the last month Lewis County has seen a sudden increase in the Phishing Scam emails directed at Bank of America and WSECU account holders.

Be Aware of Construction Scams and Frauds

"Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the US"

"Vigilance is the only real protection against Internet fraud"

The residents of Lewis County have again gone through a period of extreme weather leading to wind damage in many parts of the county. These natural disasters are a prime hunting ground for thieves and scam artists. If you have had property damaged during the flood or wind storm and are attempting to have repairs made, please make sure you know the contractors who are doing the work. Here is a short list of things you should do to help protect yourself:

1. Always check references of a contractor before work is started.
2. Always be leery of contractors demanding full payment before work begins.
3. Check to make sure the contractor is licensed to do the work he intends to do.
4. Always obtain a written estimate before agreeing to any construction work.
5. Be leery of estimates that are substantially lower than others you have obtained for the same work.

INTERNET FRAUD PROTECTION

- Be suspicious of e-mail that appears to be from banks, online auction sites, or other retailers.
- Never use a link in an e-mail to visit a Web site.
- Only purchase goods and services from sites you trust.
- Examine all online offers before buying anything.
- When you're online, be on guard. Don't respond to suspicious email and mail and hang up on phone offers that sound "too good to be true."

Internet Fraud

Con artists are always offering deals that sound "too good to be true." They used to come by mail or in a phone call. Now they're coming through a more anonymous venue to pitch fraud -- the Internet.

Although the Internet offers a safe and convenient venue to do business, fraudsters also like the Internet -- to target unsuspecting consumers.

Online scammers can ignore national borders or boundaries. They have only one objective: to steal your money. Whether it's auction fraud or identity theft, reshipping scams or foreign lotteries, be cautious, and be smart.



The internet is a powerful tool used by both legitimate businesses and scam artists alike. Always take steps to protect yourself and your personal information as you would protect your home or car.

Other Resources

Phone Busters (Canadian Link) - <http://www.phonebusters.com/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center -
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm>

The Federal Trade Commission - <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

The FBI Fraud Information page -
<http://www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm>

The Internet Crime Complaint Center - <http://www.ic3.gov/>

Lewis County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

To make a positive difference for members of our community by seeking and finding ways to affirmatively promote, preserve and deliver a feeling of security, safety and quality service.



Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Committed to make a difference.